

Videotape informs, the process often proceeds by shifting the inner horizon line. It's pushed back and, at the same instant, what's up close moves into a new light when we experience it under altered conditions. New things come in fresh, old things ride a wave of awareness.

It all boils down to Information turning into, turning on experience. Informing toward a reshaping and reformation on the inside, on the outside. Video answers the question, "What changes first, the inside or the outside, the personal or the social?" in finishing off the tired distinction by showing that "man" and "environment" are misconceptions supporting an artificial separation.

Reworking on the inside is a reworking on the outside, a retracing of the inline (character) and outline (extension) of experience. Inline and outline form a twisted circle, like a moebius strip.

Coming here is a continuation of the process of understanding videotape. Allegheny and videotape couple, who knows what's about to happen? What will be gained, lost, found, exchanged, parted or fade way? The snows of yesteryear cover the ground, only new footprints will walk away.

Video tends to mash-up conventional reality when it acts like an eyeball that flows through the world, an elastic eyeball, stretching and compressing, sliding into the tightest crevices. At times it's like a mirror that you walk and run around with and reflect things in but it's apart from an ordinary mirror in that each reflection continues to inhabit it and you can see any reflection at any time. When you tape yourself you go through the looking glass.

But it's not a passive reflector because it reflects that which does not sit easily under the title of "thing", movement, transition, change from one condition to another. Rephrasing, it reflects that aspect which is farthest away from being tied down into this and that. In another sense it processes things, situations, places, events and encloses us in an awareness of our own response. "VT is not TV. Videotape is TV flipped into itself. Television has to do with transmitting information over a distance. Videotape has to do with unfolding information ...feedback" (Paul Ryan, Radical Software, summer 1970). Allegheny is to be processed and feedback will establish an immediacy and multi-directionality within that event.

All efforts aim at spreading videotape and establishing a multidimensional alternative media. Decentralizing breaks the hold of network television and loosens the rigid presentation with its emphasis on a single, consistent point of view that fits each bit of information into a prearranged setup. The goal is many self-sufficient centers, each commanding its own equipment, avoiding the rule of some greater economic power. For the few days that the Experimental Television Center is in Meadville, Allegheny will have its own television producing capability and the hold will be broken, allowing information to arise from, and scatter in, whatever directions people see fit. People can begin to teach themselves and the situation on campus will congeal as angle is piled on angle, view on view. Access to television making hardware is a necessity. With nationwide cable television the possibilities for control are real if a few people control the kinds of Information available. The threat must be faced and the only path is to put hardware in as many hands as possible. Information must not be controlled. Strange, heartless, bureaucratic structures hold television, or so it seems when you're-on-the outside looking-in and why should that be the

case when such great numbers of people depend on television for information and entertainment. Why should an important part of people's lives be controlled from somewhere in the distance by a group of cultural overseers who persist in alliances with business interests whose aim is to more effectively drive a message into people's minds for profit and increased consumerism? Obviously, there's no reason but there is a way of solving the problem without going through endless red tape and "channels" with letters and pleas. Put television producing capability in the hands of many people, portable systems with recording and playback capability, and at the same time establish centers throughout the nation for independent television production.

The spreading and popularization of that idea is what most videotape people have in mind.

Videotape feels, in use, like a cross of the vacuum cleaner and the gun. As an instrument, it can kill or clean. It can be brutal or gentle, depending on how you see yourself. Often, it has treated me as if I were a foxhole, a hole for hiding, and it was a grenade, with pulled pin, rolled down into my dark retreat.

When taping you move around and think differently. You feel a shift in being in present time. It starts as an awareness that it's impossible to stylize and direct the flow of event-time. Trying that, you start to feel like a photographer of still pictures enduring a nightmare in which cameras don't focus and events move at a speed just beyond his ability to catch them.

Kenneth Dominick, 1972